

Weston is an extremely attractive place for prolonged community development. As a municipality, residents will greatly benefit from a higher level of services including a democratically elected governing body, police and fire protection, and dramatic increase in funding levels which will help to maintain the parks and recreation facilities adjacent to the community. Furthermore, the residents' overwhelming approval to incorporate the city shows the community's dedication to the city of Weston and their excitement for new ventures. I wish the residents of the city of Weston the best and look forward to the extraordinary opportunities that lie ahead.

APPOINTMENT OF CONFEREES ON
H.R. 3666, DEPARTMENTS OF VET-
ERANS AFFAIRS AND HOUSING
AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND
INDEPENDENT AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 1997

SPEECH OF

HON. PETER G. TORKILDSEN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, September 11, 1996

Mr. TORKILDSEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like the record to show my strong support for the Stokes' motion to instruct VA/HUD appropriation conferees. This motion instructed House conferees to accept the Senate amendments related to mental health parity and postpartum insurance coverage.

I was not present during voting on September 11, but had I been present, I would have voted for the motion. The motion passed with an overwhelming bi-partisan majority.

Both provisions provide for a healthy future for some of our Nation's most vulnerable citizens. The first prevents insurers from limiting coverage through higher copayments, fewer visits or shorter hospital stays simply because the individual is treated for mental illness. Mental health parity is a matter of basic fairness.

The National Advisory Mental Health Council [NAMHC] reported to Congress in 1993 that parity coverage of treatment of severe mental illness would actually save the national economy \$2.2 billion a year in reduced absenteeism, increased productivity, and reduced general health care cost. The MIT Sloan School of Management reported in 1995 that clinical depression costs American employers \$28.8 billion a year.

The initial reports from the Medicaid Mental Health Project in my home State of Massachusetts find similar savings attributable to the implementation of a more competitive, flexible approach to the provision of mental illness treatment services: five percent increase in persons using services; 22 percent reduction in overall expenditures; and a more competitive array of services offered.

Our Nation pays a high price for ignoring mental illness. Severe mental disorders, such as schizophrenia, manic depressive illness, and severe depression, affect 2.8 percent of the adult population and account for approximately 25 percent of all Federal disability payments. This Congress has recognized and acted on the fact that mental illness is as severe as physical illness.

This motion also provides critical insurance protections for newborns and their mothers. I

am a proud cosponsor of H.R. 3226, the Newborns' and Mothers' Health Protection Act, which mandates hospital insurance coverage of 48 hours for a vaginal delivery and 96 hours for a caesarean section, the standards set by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Academy of Pediatrics. It does not mandate how long mothers and babies should remain in the hospital; it does not dictate medical care—it simply enables it to be practiced.

Twenty-nine States have already enacted legislation to end the so-called drive-through deliveries, but Federal legislation is necessary to provide uniform standards for all States and extend protections to those covered under ERISA plans. The legislation would not, however, pre-empt State law.

By providing a healthy start for all newborns, we are insuring healthy future for our Nation.

HONORING UKRAINIAN
INDEPENDENCE

HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 17, 1996

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to congratulate the people and the Government of Ukraine on the occasion of that nation's celebration earlier this month of 5 years of independence. Ukraine has made considerable progress in political reform during this time, and Ukrainians are to be congratulated for their conduct of free and fair elections for the presidency and parliament, and their adoption of a new, democratic constitution.

As a major European nation, Ukraine, with the continent's sixth largest population and second largest land mass, has an important role to play, both geopolitically and economically, in Central and Eastern Europe. This region is also important to the United States, so that a strong and stable Ukraine, by contributing to European peace and stability, enhances U.S. national security.

Ukraine has made a promising start in its effort to establish a just, democratic system with a free and open economy. It must build on these steps by implementing its constitution, assuring minority rights, guaranteeing private property, and constructing a reliable and fair system of justice in which all Ukrainians can have faith.

The United States should make every effort to support the people of Ukraine as they strive to live in peace and democracy. We should continue assistance with political and economic reform, nonproliferation, trade relations, and military training so that we may assist Ukrainians in achieving their aspirations as a people and as a nation.

HONORING TRUE VOLUNTEERISM

HON. CHARLES F. BASS

OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 17, 1996

Mr. BASS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to an effort being undertaken by a remarkable young man whom I have the privi-

lege of representing in Congress. I am talking about 16-year-old Steffan Legasse, of Walpole, NH, who has taken it upon himself to help raise money for churches in the South that have been burned and damaged due to the wave of recent arson attacks.

We all are shocked and dismayed by these terrible arson fires. Yet one young man from Western New Hampshire was so moved by what he heard and saw that he decided to do something to help those affected by the church burnings. Steffan undertook a 1,000 mile cycling project this summer in order to raise money for the churches and his own church, St. John's Episcopal Church, of Walpole. The name of his project is "BikeHikes '96." Steffan rode his bike from home to his summer job each day and has made excursions to Vermont and Georgia in conquest of his 1,000 mile goal.

Recently, while in Georgia, the Legasse family met with the Rev. Harry Baldwin, Pastor of the Gay's Baptist Church, of Millen, GA, one of many churches recently burned. Some of the funds raised through BikeHikes '96 will help Rev. Baldwin's church. Steffan recently wrote about his meeting: "Rev. Baldwin is a very kind and compassionate person. He helped me better understand the pain felt by the members of his church, yet he also spoke of their faith, hope and determination to rebuild. I have learned that even terrible deeds can result in a positive outcome."

Steffan has biked more than 900 miles as of today. He is taking pledges and donations to raise \$10,000 for these churches.

Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of meeting young Steffan the other week and I must say I was very impressed. He is a very polite and delightful young man who is deeply committed to this project. I know that his parents, Mr. and Mrs. David Legasse, are very proud of their son, as are Steffan's other family members and friends.

Steffan is still working on BikeHikes '96 and has set up a site on the World Wide Web where computer users can learn for themselves about this wonderful project. The website address is <http://www.legasse.com/bikehikes/update.html>. For more information on Steffan's effort, you may write to 14 Roxbury Street, Keene, NH 03431.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all of my colleagues to join me today in saluting Steffan Legasse for his effort to help other citizens in need. He represents the true spirit of volunteerism in America.

TRIBUTE TO LISA ELIZABETH
GIVENS

HON. JAMES M. TALENT

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 17, 1996

Mr. TALENT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of Lisa Elizabeth Givens, a distinguished student from Chesterfield, MO. Ms. Givens recently was awarded a scholarship by the AMVETS to pursue a career in international business.

Ms. Givens competed against hundreds of applicants nationwide to win the scholarship. This is just one of the many ongoing youth programs AMVETS has developed to recognize the importance of scholarship and rewarding bright and industrious young people like Ms. Givens.